PROGRESS REPORT 2004 - 2005

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Cover Photos: (Top) Unveiling Ceremony for the General Nathanael Greene Memorial Highway (Route 117) Signs in Coventry; (Bottom) National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week Press Event on the Washington Bridge in Providence.

A message from Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director James R. Capaldi, P.E.

I'm pleased to present our latest installment of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Progress Report.

Within this document, you will find updates on some of our major projects, such as the I-195 Relocation Project and the Washington Bridge Replacement Project.

You will also learn about why we are taking advantage of an innovative federal funding mechanism, Grant Anticipated Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE), to help us move five transportation projects forward, two of which I just mentioned above.

When we announced GARVEE to the public during a State House news conference, Governor Carcieri commented that it was, "clearly a watershed moment for Rhode Island," and that the five projects, "are absolutely critical to rebuilding the infrastructure of Rhode Island and a key to the future economic development and quality of life in our state".

That's what transportation is all about, fostering economic development and providing a better quality of life. This is clearly evident through our resurfacing and enhancement programs, our bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects, our general road construction activities, and our highway beautification efforts and overall maintenance duties.

We also remain advocates for alternate forms of transportation, such as commuter rail. As such, we rally for train service in Wickford and Warwick. This expansion will help us better deal with congestion on our state highway system.

When we look at this congestion, we are fortunate to have in our corner the Transportation Management Center (TMC) that devotes its time and resources to helping us better manage traffic on the highways.

Those members of the motoring public who choose to drink and drive will be thwarted by our Office on Highway Safety (OHS) and our support of legislation to combat this evergrowing problem.

I'm proud of our online bidding system, which has reduced problems faced by those looking to bid on our construction projects. Another accomplishment has been our project tracking system, which has helped us to better manage projects, saving time and money for state taxpayers.

All in all, it's been a busy few years, and I look forward to more challenges ahead.

James R. Capaldi, P.E.
Director

GARVEE Helps Rhode Island Move Forward with Five Major Transportation Projects

The State of Rhode Island was faced with funding five major transportation projects that if financed using conventional Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) methods would have absorbed all available funding and negated completion of the projects in a timely manner.

This would translate into deteriorating conditions of the State's infrastructure and cost escalations due to inflation that would further raise the cost of financing these projects. More importantly, there would be no funding left for the traditional program which includes resurfacing, realignments, traffic signals, guardrail, other safety projects, etc.

For these reasons, the Department moved forward to implement a Federal program approved by FHWA called Grant Anticipated Revenue Vehicles, or GARVEE, that allows states to pay debt service and other bond-related expenses with future Federal-aid highway reimbursements, thereby constructing projects earlier than using traditional pay-as-you-go grant resources.

Thanks to GARVEE, RIDOT has accelerated the schedules for five of its major projects that are all critical to public safety, and the economic success and vitality of the State.

These projects include: the $325 million I-195 Relocation Project; the $100 million Route 403 Relocation Project (second phase); the $80 million Washington Bridge Replacement Project; the $120 million Sakonnet River Bridge Replacement Project; and the $50 million Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP).

RIDOT is committed to move forward with these projects in addition to its normal program of approximately $125 million/year. There is the potential of increasing that amount in the next Federal Reauthorization Bill. Nearly two years have now passed since the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century expired September 30, 2003. As of July 13, 2005, a new six-year Federal Highway Bill had yet to be passed.

Most activity for the I-195 Relocation Project is being done off of the current highway path to help reduce traffic impact to motorists.

Moving I-195 to Create a Safer Highway

The largest and most complex project that RIDOT has ever undertaken is the I-195 Relocation Project that will move I-195 south of its current location, near the City of Providence's Hurricane Barrier. Designed to produce a safer highway, the project encompasses 2.5 miles of interstate highway (I-95 and I-195) and its associated ramps and bridges that currently intersect in the middle of Downcity Providence.

Back in the 1950's, I-195 was built to carry 75,000 vehicles per day. Today, it carries over 150,000 vehicles per day. The new design, which will better address existing and future standards and demands, will also facilitate safer traffic movement through increased capacity by adding lanes and properly spacing ramps that had often contributed to motorist confusion and crashes.

Special features of the project will include a new 50-foot wide landscaped pedestrian overpass in its original location crossing I-195 and overlooking India Point Park and Narragansett Bay. The relocation of India Street slightly north to make more room for the expanded recreational fields at India Point Park, and the opportunities for expanded parking near the Washington Bridge, will also augment the Fox Point neighborhood and India Point Park.

Rounding out some of the improvements are river walks on the east and west sides of the Providence River at South Water Street and Dyer Street, as well as enhanced landscaping and ornamental street lighting.

As of June 24, 2005, seven projects at $173 million have been awarded, and nine additional projects at $176 million are yet to be awarded. The relocated I-195 should be partially open to traffic in 2007, and fully operational by 2009. The complete demolition and reconstruction of city streets should be completed by 2012.

The Relocation of Route 403

Relocated Route 403 is a new four-lane limited access highway that extends roughly 4.5 miles from Route 4 in East Greenwich to the Quonset Davisville Industrial Park in North Kingstown. The new freeway, which carries two lanes in each direction, has interchanges at Route 4, West Davisville Road, and Post Road.

The new roadway will provide infrastructure improvements to complement development of the Quonset Davisville Industrial Park by increasing roadway capacity; reducing congestion, delays and accidents; and separating through and local traffic. It will also reduce the impact of traffic on residents living adjacent to the existing Route 403.

The project is being constructed in two primary stages: Stage 1: Quonset Davisville to Amtrak (southern half); and Stage 2: Amtrak to Route 4 (northern half). Construction for Stage 1 is well underway, with four out of five construction contracts complete. Stage 2 has two out of the five construction contracts underway. Stage 1 is projected to be open to traffic in 2006, and the total project is slated to be open to traffic in 2008.

The New Washington Bridge

Due to concrete conditions, traffic volumes, and the estimated cost of a seismic retrofit RIDOT announced in 2001 that it would replace the Washington Bridge #200 (eastbound), which is used by 90,000 vehicles per day and carries I-195 East over the Seekonk River in Providence and East Providence.

At that time, RIDOT also announced that prior to replacement of the bridge, two years of repair work were necessary to allow the bridge to continue to serve the motoring public. This repair work was completed in early 2004, and construction for the new four lane highway bridge began in late Spring 2004.

A worker examines a drilled shaft at the Washington Bridge.

When the Washington Bridge #200 was originally built in the 1930s, bridge construction technology was not as sophisticated as it is today.

Open-spandrel concrete arch construction was state-of-the-art then, and while it has lasted over 70 years, it is now showing significant deterioration.

Designed to modern structural and seismic standards, the new highway bridge will be made of concrete and steel. Under a future contract, there will be a separate structure for cyclists and pedestrians.

This separate structure, a 25-foot wide park/bikeway bridge, will feature an 11-foot wide bike path and 7-foot wide pedestrian walkway with a sweeping view of the Providence Harbor.

Washington Bridge (cont.)

The southern portion of the existing highway bridge will be converted into the park/bikeway bridge, thereby preserving and reusing some of the historical structure.

The project is being constructed in two main phases. Phase I is slated for a December 2006 completion, and Phase II is slated for completion in December 2008. The final completion date for the highway bridge is June 2009, at which time the advertising component of the park/pedestrian bridge should be underway.

The Washington Bridge #200 is completely independent of Washington Bridge #700, which was rehabilitated between 1995 and 1997.

A New Sakonnet River Bridge

At the end of 2006, it is anticipated that RIDOT will advertise construction bids for the Sakonnet River Bridge Replacement Project. The bridge, which connects Portsmouth and Tiverton, carries nearly 40,000 cars per day on Route 24 over the Sakonnet River.

The new Sakonnet River Bridge will be built on the southern alignment of the existing bridge.

Its replacement will be built on the southern alignment of the existing bridge. The new 3,160-foot bridge, at an approximated cost of $120 million, will feature two lanes in each direction along with a combined bike and pedestrian path, separated from vehicular traffic by safety rails, on the north side of the bridge.

Minimal impact to traffic is anticipated, as the old bridge will remain open to traffic during the construction of the new bridge. To provide additional room to connect the new bridge to the existing roadway system, RIDOT will replace the Main Road (Route 138) Bridge.

Construction for the Main Road Bridge is expected to begin this Summer 2005. The Sakonnet River Bridge Replacement Project will be advertised for construction by 2007. It is anticipated to take three years to complete.

The FRIP - Minimizing Conflict Between Freight and High Speed Rail While Boosting the Economy

FRIP activity continues on the Wellington Bridge Project.

The Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP), in its final year of construction, stretches 22 miles from Quonset Point in North Kingstown to the Boston Switch in Central Falls.

Originally designed to improve safety and capacity by separating freight movement from Amtrak operations, the FRIP will now also be a significant component of the State's commuter rail plans by extending the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA's) operations south to the Warwick Intermodal Station and Wickford Junction.

The FRIP will also provide a major economic boost to the State and the industrial development of Quonset Point. Its completion will trigger two-way movement in freight traffic from Quonset to Worcester as Quonset Point/ Davisville grows and attracts businesses that rely on freight rail service.

An extremely complex job on several fronts, including design components, environmental issues, constructability issues, and historic concerns, the FRIP involved extensive coordination with several state and federal agencies. These included: the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, Amtrak, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation.

As part of the project, several bridges had to be reconstructed or raised to provide additional clearance. These include the completed components such as the Garnet Street Pedestrian Bridge in Warwick; the Rocky Hollow Bridge in East Greenwich; and the Lincoln Avenue Railroad Bridge in Warwick.

Parallel tracks to Amtrak's existing tracks also had to be built to further accommodate freight rail, including Track 4 in Davisville and Track 3 in Warwick.

In northern areas of the corridor, RIDOT undercut the existing tracks, for example Track 7, to provide additional vertical clearance from the tracks. This alteration also helped to prevent modifying the existing transportation infrastructure, including a series of bridges in Pawtucket and Central Falls.

The Wellington Bridge project involves construction of a 1,200-foot railroad bridge to span over the Pawtuxet River from Cranston to Warwick. It is designed to be built next to an existing historic railroad trestle bridge with the idea of maintaining the same scenic view from I-95. Additionally, as this project is extremely environmentally sensitive, RIDOT designed a structure to minimize the impact on the existing wetlands.

By the end of 2005, there will be track access for the trains. Any additional work not related to train operations (i.e. landscaping) will be completed in 2006.

Expanding Commuter Rail

RIDOT plans to build the Warwick Intermodal Station just 1,300 feet from the front door of the T.F. Green Airport terminal, as shown in this rendering of a proposed design.

RIDOT is actively pursuing the extension of the existing Providence to Boston commuter rail service south of Providence to Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. RIDOT is currently working with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to extend up to eight round trips south of Providence so that they are convenient for both daily commuters and, in the long-term, airport passengers. The MBTA currently operates 12 roundtrips between Providence and Boston under an agreement with RIDOT.

Future service will include a stop at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick, where RIDOT plans to build a train station, just 1,300 feet from the front door of the T.F. Green Airport terminal. This station would connect all modes of transportation into one central intermodal facility, including air, intercity rail, commuter rail, bus and rental cars.

RIDOT is also evaluating automated options, such as a covered bridge with a moving sidewalk, to connect the station to the airport terminal.

Additionally, RIDOT envisions train service to and from Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. RIDOT is developing a public/private partnership with the adjacent developer to construct and operate the train station and 1,000 space parking garage. In addition, RIDOT is finalizing an access agreement with Amtrak to operate on the Northeast Corridor.

RIDOT's goal is to construct both the Warwick and Wickford Junction Train Stations and extend the commuter rail service by mid-2008. A future phase could extend the service to Kingston and Westerly. Additional site assessment and environmental studies will be initiated in 2005-2006 for this future extension.

Extending the Service Life of State Roadway System

Since pavement deterioration is an ongoing problem throughout the country, RIDOT is constantly looking for new ways to address it. Each year, RIDOT invests approximately $20 million on pavement management, resulting in improvements of over 100 miles of roadway. From that, $4 million is allocated towards the Pavement Preservation Program. Experience with pavement preventive maintenance in a number of agencies demonstrates that each dollar spent now has been estimated to save up to $6 in the future.

Pavement preservation is the practice of extending the service life of roadways by making a pavement surface less permeable before water that penetrates through cracks causes accelerated structural deterioration to begin. Treatments include linear crack sealing, asphalt chip sealing, microsurfacing, paver-placed thin overlays, and other surface treatments. These treatments may be applied individually or in combination with each other.

Crack sealing, a relatively inexpensive operation, is the first line of defense. RIDOT uses a rubberized asphalt liquid to seal open joints and cracks to prevent water from penetrating into the pavement subsurfaces, which weakens the foundation soils and accelerates the destruction of the road.

Pavement Management
(cont.)

Crack sealing has been very successful in preserving the pavement and structural integrity of the State roadway system. In 2004, RIDOT awarded three crack seal contracts in which 5 million linear feet of cracks were sealed on 65 miles of roadway.
To address roads with higher crack densities than that established for crack sealing, RIDOT implemented the use of surface seals.

Chip sealing is another roadway preservation method that can be done at a lower cost than resurfacing. In 2004, RIDOT chip sealed 25 miles of roadway.

Paver Placed Elastomeric Surface Treatment (PPEST)
PPEST is a one-inch thick, gap graded hot mix with a five percent rubber-modified asphalt cement. The rubber-modified asphalt is used to greatly improve the mix's flexibility resulting in a more crack resistant pavement. RIDOT overlaid 10 miles of pavement in 2004.

Each year, RIDOT invests approximately $20 million on pavement management, resulting in improvements for over 100 miles of roadway.

After trying out various types of surface treatments, RIDOT decided on the following two systems: Rubberized Asphalt Chip Seal and Paver Placed Elastomeric Surface Treatment.

Rubberized Asphalt Chip Seal
This treatment consists of a rubber modified asphalt binder and a high quality, uniformly graded, plant coated aggregate that is applied on cracked roads and acts primarily as a waterproofing membrane to prevent in-flowing water from severely damaging the pavement foundation.

1-R Projects
When roadways are past what can be achieved through these initial pavement preservation efforts, RIDOT moves ahead to roadway resurfacing, commonly known as "1-R Projects." These types of projects help to address the immediate needs of a roadway, but with a lower impact to motorists and less cost than a complete reconstruction project.

"1-R Projects" also include the addition of new signage and pavement striping, and the process of bringing sidewalks into Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) conformity.

In order to determine which roads get resurfaced, RIDOT receives input from the local communities, RIDOT's Maintenance Division, or through actual rides of the roadways. A program is then developed to rank which roads will be done first, based on need, condition, and overall importance to the transportation system.

Two active resurfacing projects include the $2.4 million project for Sowams Road, New Meadow Road, and Massasoit Avenue in Barrington, and a $3.5 million "1-R Project" for Route 117/ Centerville Road in Warwick. Route 24 in Tiverton was recently resurfaced for $2.5 million. This project also replaced guardrail and cut in rumble strips to help warn drivers if they are going off the roadway and onto the shoulder.

Some upcoming "1-R Projects" and investments for 2005 include: Pawtucket and Newport Avenues in East Providence ($4.6 million); East Avenue in Westerly ($1.5 million); and Simmonsville Avenue in Johnston ($1.5 million).

The Maintenance Division: Improving the Daily Appearance of the State

The success of the Maintenance Division, with its highly visible duties of highway snow removal, grass cutting, sweeping, litter removal, traffic signals, and overhead lighting systems, is directly linked to the overall success of the Department. Available 24/7, Maintenance is on the front lines at all times. During the past two years, there has been a reorganization of activities and personnel, and a consolidation of efforts and facilities, to help the Division better serve the public.

To aid in snow removal efforts, and to better manage winter storm operations, the Department's Management Information Systems section worked to create a state-of-the-art system for Maintenance that will be utilized for all state snow routes. These snow routes are now on web-based GIS maps, with driver and vendor information for routes.

To augment production, Maintenance increased the Department of Corrections litter crews. The Department is also looking to expand the volunteer Adopt-a-Highway program, which provides sponsorship of two miles of highway for group litter removal, and the Sponsor a Highway Program, a privatized program where sponsors pay a fee to have a section of highway cleaned, and get recognized with a highway sign.

From just mid-March to early April 2005, RIDOT and its partners at the Department of Corrections collected 13,857 bags of litter and swept over 600 miles of roadway.

Additionally, a major emphasis has been placed on the volunteer Adopt-a-Spot program to help the State in its litter control efforts.

A new street sweeper is just one of the many tools used by Maintenance to help keep the state clean.

From just mid-March to early April 2005, RIDOT and its partners at the Department of Corrections collected 13,857 bags of litter and swept over 600 miles of roadway.

Recognizing that there are too many lights that are out on the highways, the Department has also placed a strong emphasis on getting the lights relit through the efforts of RIDOT Maintenance crews. Over the long term, however, a plan is being developed to replace the lighting systems on all the limited access highways. In the meantime, all current and future construction project activities dealing with traffic lighting, signaling, signing and striping will be incorporated within the Maintenance Division. This consolidation will enable RIDOT to better manage and coordinate their resource investments in traffic operations.

Maintenance also developed a partnership with the Town of New Shoreham (Block Island) to streamline and provide better service to Block Island residents, as well as to save money. Through a $232,000 agreement, New Shoreham will now be responsible for the maintenance of State roads on Block Island.

Fostering Better Relationships with Local Communities Through Enhancement Projects

The State's Enhancement Program was fathered by the late Senator John Chafee in the early 1990's and was originally established to provide funding to address the environmental impacts on local communities from transportation and highway construction.

The program targets non-traditional transportation projects such as those that increase mobility in alternative ways, protect the human and natural environment, and preserve and increase the livability of communities.

East Providence residents will enjoy the park setting created by the Riverside Square Enhancement Project.

Over the last two years, the Department has implemented roughly $17 million in enhancement projects.

Over the last two years, the Department has implemented roughly $17 million in enhancement projects.

As the program has evolved since its inception, communities now have the opportunity to design, and in many cases construct, their own project. This process also helps foster better relationships with the local communities.

Recent projects undertaken through the Program have included the $250,000 Riverside Square Enhancement Project, a street and landscape improvement project adjacent to the East Bay Bike Path in East Providence; and the $800,000 historic preservation of a city square in Newport known as the Washington Square Enhancement Project, which featured the bluestone materials used in the area in 1850.

Other enhancements were the $500,000 McCoy Gateway Project that was completed just in time for the AAA All Star Game in July 2004 and included sidewalk improvements and street trees along Division Street in Pawtucket; and the $400,000 restoration of historic stonewalls at Goddard Memorial State Park in Warwick and Colt State Park in Bristol.

An enhancement project that is currently underway is the $700,000 Saugatucket River Walkway in South Kingstown, a boardwalk along the Saugatucket River that will ultimately tie in with the South County Bike Path.

Demolishing the Old Jamestown Bridge

The United States Coast Guard permit that was issued for the construction of the new Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge required RIDOT to remove the old Jamestown Bridge. Currently, the design of this project is well underway and the first demolition contract was advertised for bids in Spring 2005.

The first demolition contract will involve the removal of the easternmost 5,300 feet of the bridge structure, including the high truss spans over the navigation channel of the west passage of Narragansett Bay.

Removal of the eastern 5,300 feet of the bridge is expected to generate approximately 6,000 tons of scrap structural steel and 24,000 cubic yards of concrete debris.

The steel will be recycled, while the concrete debris will be utilized to construct a series of three artificial reefs in Rhode Island marine waters, thus providing an environmentally beneficial reuse of the demolition debris.

The first demolition contract is expected to get underway by the Fall of 2005, with the major demolition work starting in the Spring of 2006. Demolition should be complete by the end of 2006. Removal of the remaining 1,600 feet of bridge, originally slated to remain as a fishing pier will be completed by way of a second, subsequent contract. The status and location of a new fishing pier has yet to be determined.

The Jamestown Bridge Demolition Project is slated to get underway in Fall 2005.

A New Interchange for Better Traffic Circulation and Highway Access in East Providence

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the City of East Providence are conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the undertaking of an improvement project for the I-195/Taunton Avenue/ Warren Avenue Interchange within the City of East Providence. The project goals will be to provide system users with improved access to and from the interstate. Currently movements to and from the east to do not exist at this interchange, which has created traffic flow issues along the adjacent streets of East Providence, as well as hindered development of the East Providence waterfront along the Seekonk and Providence Rivers.

The EA process began in November 2004, and is scheduled for completion in February 2006. Project alternatives will be evaluated during the EA process and will be incorporated into the upcoming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Funding for this project will be secured in a future TIP. The first public workshop is planned for Fall 2005. Project design is anticipated for completion in 2012.

Helping to Reduce Congestion and Improve Traffic Flow on Busy Providence Interchange

A new interchange for Routes 6 and 10 in Providence will reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

The Department is undertaking an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that involves improvements to the Routes 6 and 10 interchange in Providence. Specific parameters include Route 6 from the Hartford Avenue interchange to north of the Tobey Street Overpass and Route 10 from the Cranston Street Viaduct to Route 6.

The proposed project is slated to help reduce congestion within the interchange, reduce interchange-related traffic congestion in the adjacent communities, and improve north-to-west travel movement by adding a missing movement - the necessity for which was not anticipated when the original interchange was designed.

The project will also address the deterioration of the existing bridges, as nine bridges out of eleven are approximately fifty years old and nearing the end of their useful lives.

The project alternatives will be evaluated through the EIS process, and final improvements will be incorporated in the upcoming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

A public hearing was held in June 2005. Project funding needs to be included in future TIPs. This project may need to use a separate GARVEE to be built.

The TMC Mitigates Congestion and Incidents on the State's Roadways

RIDOT's Transportation Management Center (TMC) provides the focal point for technology initiatives associated with Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). In addition to researching new technologies, the TMC has developed significant stakeholder involvement in order to promote ITS; provide for more effective incident management; provide for the safety of the motoring public and incident responders; and, educate and inform the public as to the benefits of ITS as a "tool" to mitigate increasing traffic congestion and incidents on the State's roadways.

The focus for integration has spread to neighboring states with the recognition that the bordering states, such as Massachusetts and Connecticut, have traffic impacts that spill over to Rhode Island and vice versa. Therefore, the TMC has successfully established working relationships with both state's TMC's and has installed through the I-95 Regional Integration Project five centrally controlled variable message boards in Massachusetts and one in Connecticut.

The TMC has also begun to install cameras on existing infrastructure and is actively engaged in a replacement program.

The TMC (cont.)

Systems integration is the next big effort that is presently being developed in the TMC to more effectively share information using the various equipment that is now installed on the State roadways.

In early March 2005, RIDOT joined three other New England states in implementing 5-1-1, a new traveler information service.

Director Capaldi makes the first call to the State's new 5-1-1 System during the program's launch in early March 2005.

Along with its successful volunteer RhodeWatchers Program, the TMC also has a traffic channel on Cox Communications' digital cable system, a Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) system, and a website, helping to share the information about any incidents involving the motoring public.

Monthly incident management meetings are also held with State and local officials to learn from previous incidents, or to plan for future incidents.

Making Rhode Island Roadways Safer for All Motorists Through the OHS

Safety continues to be the highest priority for the Department. Despite ongoing efforts by its Office on Highway Safety (OHS), needless fatalities and injuries occur on Rhode Island's roads. Too many people still choose not to wear seat belts or drive drunk.

Rhode Island suffered an increase in the number of fatalities over the past two years. In 2002, there were 84 fatalities and in 2003 there were 104. In 2004, the numbers dramatically decreased to 82 fatalities.

To provide effective and aggressive programming, OHS partners with concerned and involved organizations throughout the State. Examples of these partnerships include the creation of the Operation Blue Riptide Program in December 2003.

This program provides funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to police departments from virtually every city and town to provide overtime drunk driving enforcement patrols every weekend throughout the year. Rhode Island State Police patrols complement the program to enhance statewide coverage.

Increasing seat belt usage is an integral component of the Department's safety program. In 2004, Rhode Island continued to increase compliance rates, reaching an all time high of 76 percent and surveys indicate that African Americans are buckling up at a higher rate than the general population. However, the seat belt rate lags behind the national usage rate of 80 percent as well as those states that have a primary seat belt use law. A primary seat belt law allows police officers to pull over offenders just for not wearing their seat belt, and not as a result of another violation.

OHS continues to work with the Providence and Woonsocket Safe Communities Programs to spearhead efforts to increase seat belt and appropriate child passenger restraint system use. Special efforts are made to reach low income and minority populations in each metropolitan area. Partnerships with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) provide opportunities to reach out and work with the young adults in Rhode Island through the Team Spirit Training and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) activities.

OHS (cont.)

OHS also works with the Hospitality Association to provide Bar Code® training to ensure that food service employees are trained to serve alcohol responsibly.

In concert with NHTSA national campaigns, OHS sponsors comprehensive statewide media and enforcement campaigns. The "Click It or Ticket" seat belt campaign occurs in May and "You Drink and Drive. You Lose." occurs around Labor Day.

Last year, in response to a continued high percentage of alcohol involved crashes and fatalities, OHS implemented an additional comprehensive six week campaign from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day.

The Rhode Island State Police, led by its Superintendent, Colonel Steven Pare, continues to partner with local police departments and RIDOT for the state's highway safety initiatives.

Two major media activities were also held, including the "Guess Who Is Not Coming To Dinner," and "How To Host a Responsible Holiday Party" event.

OHS also included a new message that notified the public to call *77 on their cell phones to report a suspected drunk driver.